Excellence recognized: Kansas State University No. 2 on list of best public universities

Academics, career placement and more are earning Kansas State University recognition as one of the best public universities in the nation.

Learn.org, a highly visited website that has been helping millions of students find degree options, scholarships and more, rates the university as No. 2 in the nation on its 2019 list of best public schools. Kansas State University is the highest-rated school in the Big 12 Conference. The University of Kansas is rated third on the list.

To compile its list, Learn.org considered hundreds of public universities across the country and selected Kansas State University based on academic and career resources, the quality of education, faculty and more.

In its write-up for Kansas State University's high placement, Learn.org cited the number of degree options offered by the university, calling it "an impressive array of programs." The university offers more than 250 undergraduate options and more than 150 graduate degrees and certificates. Learn.org also highlighted the university's reputation for graduating students ready to hit the workforce, as evidenced by the high percentage - now at 96 percent - of Kansas State University students who are employed or continuing their education six months after graduating.

"Degree options and high placement rates are just a few of the many reasons why Kansas State University is indeed one of the nation's best public universities," said Pat Bosco, vice president for student life and dean of students. "Other national publications have cited K-State for the high average starting salaries our graduates earn and for being one of the top educational values around. K-State also is a leader in providing the services that keep students prepared and focused on learning, such as career guidance and placement, undergraduate research and education abroad opportunities, first-year student success programs and much more."

Financial assistance also is a priority at Kansas State University, Bosco said, noting the university awards more than $248 million in financial assistance annually, including $38 million in scholarships.

"This high ranking by Learn.org is a tribute to our professors, academic advisers and student life staff who work tirelessly to ensure every student we serve has a chance to succeed - and it shows," Bosco said.

K-State Research and Extension specialists develop urban-rural partnerships to improve water quality

A paper published in the February issue of the Journal of Extension shows that urban-rural partnerships are increasingly viewed as an important component of efforts to improve water quality at the watershed scale. The publication highlights the critical role of Extension specialists in developing these partnership programs, the success of which hinges on targeted best management practice (BMP) implementation and relationships with agricultural producers.

The paper was authored by K-State researchers Trisha Moore and Aleksey Sheshukov, along with KCARE watershed specialist Ron Graber. Titled "Integrating Watershed Management Across the Urban-Rural Interface: Opportunities for Extension Watershed Programs," the paper explores the potential to integrate the water quality efforts of urban and rural watershed stakeholders through an off-site BMP program, using a program currently in use by the City of Wichita as an example. Unlike existing off-site programs, which generally require off-site BMPs to be implemented within city jurisdictional boundaries, this program allows for off-site BMPs implemented by agricultural producers in priority areas of the Little Arkansas watershed upstream of the city.
SBA announces Great Plains technology and Manufacturing Cluster initiative at university

The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the addition of the Great Plains Technology and Manufacturing Cluster, or Great Plains TMC, initiative to the programs it supports through the nationwide Regional Innovation Clusters initiative. The program has been awarded $500,000 for the first year with a four-year option for a total award of up to $2.5 million over five years.

The Great Plains TMC, led by the Kansas State University Technology Development Institute, serves the entire state of Kansas and western Missouri and joins a portfolio of programs supported through the SBA’s Regional Innovation Cluster program, which is designed to support geographically concentrated groups of interconnected businesses, suppliers, service providers and related institutions in a particular industry or field. The goal of this new initiative is to assist manufacturers and technology entrepreneurs, particularly in rural regions, in making the critical connections to innovation resources required to protect, develop, launch and grow new products and businesses in the service region.

The Great Plains TMC is partnering with a wide range of economic development entities, including the Kansas Department of Commerce, NetWork Kansas, the Kansas Small Business Development Centers and a number of rural regional development offices across the service region to increase awareness, connectivity to resources and collaboration across the Great Plains.

University center recognized for continued excellence in computer security research

The Center for Information and Systems Assurance at K-State has once again been redesignated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Research by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security. K-State received its initial designation in 2010. It was redesignated in 2014 and now again in 2019 through 2024.

The mission of the Center for Information and Systems Assurance is to conduct fundamental and applied research in information and computer security and high-assurance systems, as well as advance the knowledge of students in many disciplines within and beyond engineering.

"The designation certifies that K-State continues to operate a highly regarded center for cybersecurity research - we are a place that knows security," said

Novel data sharing agreement accelerates translational research

1Data, a unique collaboration by researchers at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, has signed a first-of-its-kind data sharing agreement with a local animal health company.

Aratana Therapeutics, a Leawood-based company focused on developing and commercializing innovative therapeutics for dogs and cats, is the first company to share historic data from its clinical studies in dogs and cats.

1Data will use this data to continue populating its clearinghouse platform, which is already populated with data from human and animal health. The 1Data platform is designed to be a resource for "big data" researchers around the world to rapidly develop and test new therapeutics, drugs and medical technologies for people and companion animals.

The 1Data team is in the final stages of completing its technology platform to aid researchers who are working to prevent, treat and cure human or animal diseases.

Once finalized, researchers can request data from 1Data’s secure, open-source database to mine specific information from a vast amount of standardized, pre-clinical, genomic and proteomic human and animal health data.

Search results can be filtered by various criteria. This enables researchers to analyze and compare data across animal species or even look at how the genetic information from a specific animal compares to that of a human. This could help scientists easily identify congruences in diseases that affect people, pets or both hosts, such as cancers, chronic mitral valve disease, possible links between asthma and bovine respiratory disorder, and other illnesses.

Data also can be plugged into computational modules that simulate humans, food animals or companion animals. This makes it possible for researchers to see which drugs are likely to fail during clinical testing and at what phase - thereby saving pharmaceutical companies both time and money. Additionally, the robust selection of computational models will save animal lives because it reduces the number of animals needed during testing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kansas State University's college radio station, 91.9 KSDB FM, received first in the nation in the
Eugene Vasserman, director of the center and associate professor in computer science.

categories of Best Community News Coverage, Best Show Promotional Poster and Best Podcast from the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Conference.

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